

***There is none like you, O LORD; you are great, and your name is great in might. Who would not fear you, O King of the nations? This is your due, for among all the wise ones of the nations and in all their kingdoms, there is none like you. (Jeremiah 10:6,7 ESV).***

In verses one through sixteen of Jeremiah chapter ten, the prophet of the Lord urges the people of God not to adopt the idolatrous practices of surrounding nations. He first illustrates the folly of worshiping idols crafted by human hands. Jeremiah contemplates the profound contrast between the gods of human imagination and the one true God of heaven and earth. In the sixth verse, he reflects on this contrast, “There is none like you, O LORD; you are great, and your name is great in might.” Then, in the next verse, the prophet poses a very logical question. He writes, “Who would not fear you, O King of the nations? For this is your due, for among all the wise ones of the nations and in all their kingdoms, there is none like you.” In other words, given that none of the false gods from the surrounding nations can match Jehovah's greatness, power, and wisdom, the only rational question is, “Who would not fear thee, O King of the nations?”

Throughout the Word of God, we often encounter questions that have clear answers. Sometimes, these answers are implied, while at other times they are explicit. They are undoubtedly intended to be rhetorical in nature. We frequently find these questions in Scripture because they emphasize a specific aspect of who God is. For example, after the Israelites were delivered from the Egyptians and all the Egyptians drowned in the Red Sea, Moses asks a question with an obvious answer: “Who is like you, O Lord, among the gods? Who is like you, majestic in holiness, awesome in praises, performing wonders?” (Exodus 15:11). In Psalm 71:19, the psalmist seeks to convey another facet of God's character, writing, “Your righteousness, O God, reaches the high heavens. You who have done great things.” This statement follows the simple yet profound question, “O God, who is like You?” The answer, of course, is that there is no one like the God revealed in Holy Scripture!

The prophet Jeremiah's question can have only one answer: everyone should fear God because no one is like Him! This is what He deserves! In other words, because God is both the Creator and Redeemer, infinitely more significant than all His creation, He merits appropriate fear from mankind. Although this is undeniably true, our sinful natures and humanity's profound blindness toward God prevent us from fearing the Lord as we should. The Apostle Paul, writing to the church in Rome, makes this clear. Describing the plight of all mankind due to the bondage of sin, he states, “There is no fear of God before their eyes” (Romans 3:18). While sin's all-encompassing bondage is undoubtedly true, it is vital to recognize that mankind remains obligated to fear the Lord. Sin does not diminish responsibility! As Jeremiah teaches us, it is His due!

In the Book of Revelation, chapter fifteen, a passage resonates with Jeremiah's question. The setting of this text is glorious, depicting the declaration of the saints in heaven who have triumphantly overcome the evil one, the beast. This is part of a victory song for the Lamb: "Great and amazing are your deeds, O Lord God the Almighty! Just and true are your ways, O King of the nations! Who will not fear, O Lord, and glorify your name? For you alone are holy. All nations will come and worship you, for your righteous acts have been revealed." Revelation 15:3,4. The topic is ultimately summarized by the words of the Preacher, the son of David, King in Jerusalem. Upon concluding all his words of wisdom in the book of Ecclesiastes, the Preacher states: "The end of the matter; all has been heard. Fear God and keep his commandments, for this is the whole duty of man." Eccl. 11:13.

The topic of the Fear of God is prevalent in both the Old and New Testaments, and the fear of the Lord is a duty for all mankind. What practical objectives can be drawn from this truth? Let us explore three essential objectives. They are:

- 1) Define the fear of God.
- 2) Provide examples that demonstrate the fear of the Lord as an appropriate response to a sincere understanding of who God is.
- 3) Scripture teaches that the fear of the Lord is a vital quality that Christians should actively cultivate in their sanctification.

### ***Define the Fear of God***

We begin with the often misunderstood yet incredibly important task of defining the fear of God. To aid our understanding, it may be helpful first to clarify what the fear of God is not. We assert that when the Bible speaks of the fear of God, it is neither contrary to nor opposed to love for God. When we read in Proverbs 23:17, "Let not your heart envy sinners, but continue in the fear of the Lord all the day," Scripture does not contradict itself when we also read in Deuteronomy 6:5, "You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, with all your soul, and with all your strength." This point must be emphasized because, in a non-biblical sense, fear and love are often perceived as opposites. However, we will observe that this is not the case in Scripture, as noted in Deuteronomy 10:12, where the two go hand in hand. It reads, "And now, Israel, what does the LORD your God require of you, but to **fear the LORD** your God, to walk in all his ways, **to love him**, to serve the LORD your God with all your heart and with all your soul?" Thus, we confirm that our first consideration is that the fear of God and love for God are not opposed to one another.

In his highly regarded book on Christian ethics titled *Principles of Conduct*, the late Professor John Murray writes: "The commandments of God are the concrete expressions of God's glory and will. If we are committed to Him in devotion and love, we shall also love His commandments. The fear and love of God are simply different aspects of our response

to Him in the glory of His majesty and holiness.” Murray further develops this idea by writing, “The fear of God is but the reflex in our consciousness of the transcendent perfection that alone could warrant and demand totality of our commitment in love and devotion.” As Christians grow in the grace and knowledge of their Savior, the Holy Spirit teaches them that the fear and love of the LORD go hand in hand. Both are grounded in God's character and in what God has accomplished by His grace for their souls.

The fear of God does not contradict our love for Him; similarly, it does not conflict with the understanding that God is our heavenly Father. This is important to emphasize because many today come from homes where earthly fathers did not exemplify love and discipline. The divorce rate in the United States for first-time marriages in 2024 was estimated to be between 40% and 50%. Second and third marriages have even higher divorce rates, ranging from 60% to 73%, respectively. Although the grace of God can overcome obstacles related to fatherhood, many face a lifetime of challenges due to broken homes where a father was not consistently present. Sadly, these high divorce rates lead many to struggle with fear and distrust toward their earthly fathers. This can challenge a believer's understanding of God as their Father. In Psalm 103:13, we observe the perfect balance between love and fear. The Lord is portrayed as a father who demonstrates compassion toward children who walk in the fear of God. It reads, “As a father shows compassion to his children, the LORD shows compassion to those who fear Him.”

In considering what the fear of the Lord is not, it is essential to clarify that the fear of God does not arise from doubt or uncertainty. Referring back to Jeremiah chapter 10, we observe that the nations who worshiped and honored their false gods genuinely feared those deities! In verse two of Jeremiah 10, we see that the nations surrounding Israel engaged in some form of astrology that they believed was ordained by their false gods. The outcome was dismay and fear. The Psalmist writes, “Thus says the LORD: Do not learn the way of the nations, nor be dismayed by the signs of the heavens, because the nations are dismayed by them.” Then, in verse five of chapter ten, God's people are exhorted not to fear the false gods of the neighboring nations. The prophet writes, “Their idols are like scarecrows in a cucumber field, and they cannot speak; they must be carried for they cannot walk. Do not fear them, for they cannot do evil, nor is it in them to do good.” The nations' fear of their false deities stemmed from doubt and uncertainty. It arose from the fact that the false gods of the nations, who were not gods at all, were unpredictable and changeable. How completely different is the unchanging true God and the unchanging truth of Holy Scripture! The fear that He deserves is not founded on doubt or uncertainty! It is founded upon the eternal Word of God! “The grass withers and the flowers fade, but the Word of our God endures forever.” Isaiah 40:8.

One final consideration is that the fear of God is not based on a feeling of guilt. The Christian rejoices in Romans 8:1, which unequivocally states, "There is therefore no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus." The Apostle Paul explains why Christians are blameless in God's eyes. He writes in Ephesians 1:4, "even as he chose us in him before the foundation of the world." Why were they chosen? "That we should be holy and blameless before him." A biblical fear of God does not stem from a guilty distrust of Him! For the believer in Jesus Christ, guilt and sin have been washed away by the substitutionary atonement of the Son of God. As a result, the Christian can wholeheartedly sing, "Arise, my soul, arise, shake off thy guilty fears. The bleeding sacrifice on my behalf appears! "

We have examined what the fear of God is not. In doing so, we gain a better understanding of what biblical fear truly means. We recognize that it is neither opposed to love nor God's fatherhood. It is not rooted in doubt or uncertainty; we have established that it does not stem from guilt. Now, we must focus more directly on the question: From a biblical perspective, what does it mean to fear the LORD? Positively speaking, then, what is the fear of the Lord?

Once again, Murray's book, *Principles of Conduct*, proves to be quite helpful. He explains that "fear" has at least two distinct meanings in Scripture. In English, "fear" often implies terror and dread or a sense of being afraid. In God's Word, a good example of this type of fear can be found in Deuteronomy 2:25. The context is that the children of Israel, after wandering for 40 years, are finally entering the promised land. The land they will enter is filled with enemies who will gladly destroy them. However, God, who has been with Israel from the beginning, will instill fear and dread in the hearts of their enemies. The Lord says, "This day I will begin to put the dread and fear of you on the peoples who are under the whole of heaven. They shall hear the report of you and shall tremble and be in anguish because of you." (Deut. 2:25). This fear represents a deep sense of dread. God will instill this fear in the hearts of the natives living in the land of Canaan. This fear is reasonable and rational, rooted in the reality of what God has previously done for Israel. We could argue that the Canaanites had good reason to be afraid!

The second usage of the word "fear" in God's Word does not imply dread or being afraid; rather, it expresses a sense of reverence and honor. This understanding is also rational and reasonable, based on the reality that reverence and honor are owed to our sovereign and majestic God. For example, in Leviticus 19, God gives instructions to Moses. He says, "Speak to all the congregation of the people of Israel and say to them: You shall be holy, for I the LORD your God am holy. Every one of you shall revere his mother and his father, and you shall keep my Sabbaths: I am the LORD your God." (Lev. 19:2,3). In this verse, the word for "revere" is the same word often translated as "fear" in other biblical passages. As the fifth commandment states, children are to revere, respect, and honor

their parents. All of these words can be viewed as synonyms for the way the word "fear" is frequently used in Scripture.

The point is that when Scripture refers to the fear of God, both elements can be involved. There may be a specific fear of being afraid because one does not want to offend the Lord with sin. Understanding who the Lord is and how gracious He has been to us despite our sins should evoke a wholesome fear of not grieving the Holy Spirit. This is the type of fear the writer of the letter to the Hebrews draws our attention to. He writes, "Therefore, while the promise of entering his rest still stands, let us fear lest any of you seem to have failed to reach it." (Hebrews 4:1). Later in the letter, the author writes, "It is a fearful thing to fall into the hands of the living God." These passages warn believers not to stray from their walk with the Lord. One final example is the words of the Lord Jesus in Matthew 10:28: "Do not fear those who kill the body but are unable to kill the soul; rather fear Him who can destroy both soul and body in hell."

In Jeremiah 32:39-40, we learn that the fear of God is an essential part of the blessings of the New Covenant. This fear encompasses a profound reverence and respect for our great God and Savior. Jeremiah writes, "I will give them one heart and one way, that they may fear me forever, for their own good and for the good of their children after them. I will make with them an everlasting covenant that I will not turn away from doing good to them. And I will put the fear of me in their hearts, so they may not turn from me." This fear residing in the believer's heart is one of the blessings of the Gospel. The writer of Psalm 130 recognized this type of fear. He understood that when a gracious and holy God forgives our sins, a fitting response should be reverence and honor. In verses 3 and 4 of this great Psalm, he writes, "If you, O LORD, should mark iniquities, O LORD, who could stand? But with you, there is forgiveness that you may be feared." Some may ask, shouldn't forgiveness, which is given to those who confess their sins, produce a profound love? Shouldn't great joy follow this forgiveness? The answer, of course, is yes! However, it should also cultivate a heartfelt reverence for the Lord. It should inspire a deep desire to honor and walk closely with God. These things are not mutually exclusive!

For believers in Christ, the fear of God is an essential aspect of their sanctification. This is clearly illustrated in the second letter to the Corinthians. The Apostle encourages the believers in Corinth to lead lives distinct from the deeds of the flesh and the fallen world of sin. He concludes this section in chapter seven, verse 1, writing, "Since we have these promises, beloved, let us cleanse ourselves from every defilement of body and spirit, bringing holiness to completion in the fear of God." A biblical fear of the LORD helps keep believers from sin while encouraging them in their sanctification. In this regard, it is similar to a horse rider using reins to pull back the horse while using a whip to urge it forward! To summarize our understanding of a biblical fear of the Lord, albeit imperfectly due to our

remaining sins, this fear involves profound respect for God's power, majesty, and glory. It recognizes God's sovereignty over all creation, fostering humility and a desire to conform to His will.

### ***Biblical Illustrations of the Fear of God***

Having established a working definition of the fear of God, our objective now is to provide examples that demonstrate the fear of the Lord as an appropriate response to a sincere understanding of who God is. We live in an age with far too many casual and sometimes flippant attitudes toward God. In his classic book titled *The Knowledge of the Holy*, the late twentieth-century author A.W. Tozer wrote, "What comes into our minds when we think about God is the most important thing about us. It is my opinion that the Christian conception of God current in these middle years of the twentieth century is so decadent as to be utterly beneath the dignity of the Most High God and actually to constitute for professed believers something amounting to a moral calamity." Tozer wrote these words in the 1950s. Sadly, they are as accurate today as they were in his lifetime! This mindset is entirely opposite to that of the believers we read of in Holy Scripture. There, we often see that when the Almighty God is comprehended (as much as possible, since we can never fully understand God), believers are overcome with reverence, leading to obedience.

The prophet Isaiah received a vision of the Lord seated on His throne in heaven. He tells us that God is high and exalted, and the holy angels continually cry out in worship, "Holy, holy, holy is the Lord God of hosts; the whole earth is full of His glory" (Isaiah 6:3). With this clear vision of God and a profound awareness of his sinful condition, we should pay close attention to the prophet's response to this revelation. In verse 5, he writes, "Woe is me! For I am lost; for I am a man of unclean lips, and I dwell among a people of unclean lips; for my eyes have seen the King, the LORD of hosts." A clear apprehension of the Lord is a humbling experience! Yet, this reverence for God led the prophet to desire obedience. When God asked who He should send as a witness to Himself, notice Isaiah's response: "Here I am! Send me!" Isaiah was ready and willing to serve! Similarly, while banished to the island of Patmos, John the Apostle had a vision of the Son of Man. Notice his response: "When I saw him, I fell at his feet as though dead" (Rev. 1:17). The Apostle realized that God was Holy and Almighty. Yet still, John, in obedience to the command to "write what you see in a book to the seven churches" (Rev. 1:11), wrote the book of Revelation!

Both examples illustrate two men to whom the Holy Spirit granted a vision, overwhelming them with reverence and awe due to their awareness of how they compared to the LORD! In both cases, their response was to fall down, worship, and obey. These are merely two examples; many more could be provided. John Murray writes, "The fear of God

in which godliness consists of is the fear which constrains adoration and love. The fear consists of awe, reverence, honor, and worship, all at the highest level of exercise.” This experience is often reflected in God's Word, where men and women acknowledge the greatness, power, and majesty of their Creator. When the Apostle Peter witnessed a great miracle of catching boatloads of fish, he saw a demonstration of tremendous sovereignty and power, leading to his recognition of his sinfulness. This exemplifies an aspect of the fear of the Lord. “But when Simon Peter saw this, he fell down at Jesus’ knees saying, “Go away from me, Lord, for I am a sinful man.” (Luke 5:8). When the Virgin Mary was confronted by the angel Gabriel and told she would conceive and give birth to a child, though confused by his words, we should notice in her response an example of submission rooted in the fear of God. “And Mary said, ‘Behold, the Lord’s bondservant; may it be done to me according to your word.’” (Luke 1: 38). Later, in her song of praise to God, she sings, “And his mercy is for those who fear him from generation to generation.” (Luke 1: 50). We should see that the fear of God is expressed through a joyful, submissive will and total commitment to the Lord. Though imperfectly, a believer's heart and mind reflect a deep desire to serve the Lord. There is no conflict between the fear of God and the joy that believers have in Christ. This is a key aspect of what the Bible means by the fear of God. Murray captures this well by likening it to a reflexive action. He writes, “The fear of God is but the reflex in our consciousness of the transcendent perfection which alone could warrant and demand the totality of our commitment in love and devotion.”

Obedience to God stems from a proper fear of Him. How else could the Old Testament figure Abraham have been willing to sacrifice his beloved son in obedience to God's command? By faith, Abraham went through all the preparations and was about to sacrifice his son when the angel of the LORD called to him. We see this in Genesis 22. Notice the response Abraham received after he was told not to harm his boy: “Do not lay your hand on the boy or do anything to him, for now I know that you fear God, seeing you have not withheld your son, your only son, from me.” (Genesis 22:12). How troubled Abraham must have been when God commanded him to sacrifice his son Isaac! What a horrible and brutal trial that must have been, especially knowing that God had promised to continue His covenant through his son! Yet, because Abraham feared the Lord, he was willing to do what was asked of him. This same fear of the Lord kept Joseph from succumbing to the temptation of Potiphar’s wife. Joseph knew that God had preserved and blessed him after his lengthy time in an Egyptian prison. Yet, in obedience to His God, he would not yield to sin. He asks the wicked woman, “How then can I do this wickedness and sin against God?” Ultimately, his fear of the Lord allowed him to escape the house to avoid the adulterous woman. Later in his life, as a high-ranking official in Egypt, he had the opportunity to help his brothers and their families prevent starvation due to famine. He states in Genesis 42:18 while speaking to his brothers, “Do this and you will live, for I fear

God.” Both Abraham and his great-grandson Joseph knew that Almighty God was the sovereign king of the universe. They understood that God’s will and submission to that will were unquestionably the way to live their lives. Despite their trials and difficulties, they believed God completely controlled their lives.

Murray's words are very accurate when considering the examples of Old and New Testament believers. He says that the fear of God “refers to the conception we entertain of God and the attitude of heart and mind that is ours by reason of that conception.” As mentioned earlier, we live in an age where multitudes of souls have a very incorrect conception of the true God of heaven. This should never be true for a believer in Christ who knows and loves God’s Word. God has revealed Himself in Holy Scripture, so we do not have to wonder what He is like. Our conception of God is only valid as it aligns with His infallible and inerrant Word. Christ is the eternal Word in human flesh. By faith, we need to know Christ, who should be our conception of God! He is “the exact representation of the glory of God and the exact imprint of his nature, and he upholds the universe by the word of his power.” (Heb. 1:3). We need the mindset of David, the sweet psalmist of Israel, who writes, “Where can I go from your Spirit? Or where can I flee from your presence? If I ascend to heaven, you are there! If I make my bed in Sheol, you are there! If I take the wings of the dawn, if I settle at the farthest limits of the sea, even there your hand shall lead me, and your right hand shall hold me.” (Psalm 139:7-10). May the author of this essay and all who read these words have a conception of God like this!

### ***Christian Sanctification and the Fear of God***

Christian sanctification is the process by which believers are set apart for God, made holy, and increasingly conformed to the image of Jesus. It involves separating from and combating sin while dedicating oneself to God's purposes. This process begins at the time of conversion to Christ and continues until the believer’s soul goes to be with their Savior. This work is accomplished through God’s grace and the work of the Holy Spirit. However, this does not mean believers have no role in this process; quite the contrary! In his letter to the Philippian church, Paul writes, “Therefore, my beloved, as you have always obeyed, so now, not only as in my presence but much more in my absence, work out your salvation with fear and trembling, for it is God who works in you, both to will and to work for his good pleasure.” (Phil. 2:12-13). As a result of their union with Christ, the Holy Spirit empowers believers to hate sin and strive daily against it. Throughout their Christian journey, believers are encouraged to grow in the grace and knowledge of the Lord Jesus Christ, to resist the evil one, and to stand against the temptation to sin. The fear of the Lord is a vital aspect of the sanctification process and serves as an excellent aid in this journey. In fact, the wise writer of the Book of Proverbs equates it with the beginning of knowledge.



He writes, “The fear of the LORD is the beginning of knowledge; fools despise wisdom and instruction.” (Proverbs 1:7).

The fear of God should be greatly desired by all who love the Lord, as God highly regards it among His people. The Psalmist wrote, “The Lord takes pleasure in those who fear Him.” (Psalm 147:11). For those who fight against their sinful nature and have reverence for who God is, there are great blessings from God! The author of Psalm 128 makes this clear: “Blessed is everyone who fears the Lord, who walks in his ways! You shall eat the fruit of the labor of your hands; you shall be blessed, and it shall be well with you. Your wife will be like a fruitful vine within your house; your children will be like olive shoots around your table. Behold, thus shall the man be blessed who fears the Lord.” (Ps. 128:1-4). How wonderfully blessed are the children whose parents seek to walk in the fear of the Lord!

The twenty-first-century generation urgently needs to know the God who has revealed Himself through His Word! In his classic work *The Sovereignty of God*, A.W. Pink stated, “The sovereignty of the God of Scripture is absolute, irresistible, infinite.” Mankind requires a high and lofty view of our Holy and Almighty Creator! Sadly, many in the Church of Christ have failed to exalt God and His Word in their preaching! Oh, that the church's hymns would be sung and embraced!

Exalt the Lord, His praise proclaim;  
All ye His servants, praise His name,  
Who in the Lord's house ever stand  
And humbly serve at His command.  
The Lord is good, His praise proclaim;  
Since it is pleasant, praise His name;  
His people for His own He takes  
And His peculiar treasure makes.

I know the Lord is high in state,  
Above all gods our Lord is great;  
The Lord performs what He decrees,  
In heav'n and earth, in depths and seas.  
He makes the vapors to ascend  
In clouds from earth's remotest end;  
The lightnings flash at His command;  
He holds the tempest in His hand.

Exalt the Lord, His praise proclaim;

All ye His servants, praise His name,  
Who in the Lord's house ever stand  
And humbly serve at His command.  
Forever praise and bless His name,  
And in the church His praise proclaim;  
In Zion is His dwelling place;  
Praise ye the Lord, show forth His grace.

These wonderful words, taken from Psalm 135, should be sung by all who desire to see the Triune God exalted for all eternity! May they be sung in every assembly that confesses the name of Jesus Christ as Lord. Additionally, may there be a heartfelt desire among all who read these words!

We will never truly understand the fear of God unless we learn about Him from Scripture. While the heavens and the earth speak of His greatness and glory, the revelation of His Word is absolutely necessary. Consider the ancient king Nebuchadnezzar of Babylon. God humiliated and rebuked him because of his pride. He needed to learn that there is only one true King! By the end of his trial, he realized he was no longer the all-powerful king he believed himself to be! These are his words in the Book of Daniel: “At the end of that time, I, Nebuchadnezzar, raised my eyes toward heaven, and my sanity was restored. Then I praised the Most High; I honored and glorified him who lives forever. His dominion is eternal; his kingdom endures from generation to generation. All the peoples of the earth are regarded as nothing. He does as he pleases with the powers of heaven and the peoples of the earth. No one can hold back his hand or say to him: “What have you done?” (Daniel 4:34-35). God is the sovereign King of the universe. He exercises His power when, where, and how He desires. These great truths do not make God, in any sense, aloof or distant from us or His creation. Indeed, God is infinite in power, as well as in goodness, patience, love, and so on. Reverence and awe for the greatness of the Almighty do not conflict with God as our loving Heavenly Father!

John Murray writes, “The fear of God is the soul of godliness.” Progressive sanctification is the process of growing in godliness and holiness. This should be the goal for all Christians. Since God is holy, believers must strive to reflect this as well. Writing to first-century believers scattered throughout modern-day Turkey, the Apostle Peter states, “Therefore, preparing your minds for action, and being sober-minded, set your hope fully on the grace that will be brought to you at the revelation of Jesus Christ. As obedient children, do not be conformed to the passions of your former ignorance, but as he who called you is holy, you also be holy in all your conduct, since it is written, “You shall be holy, for I am holy.” And if you call on him as Father who judges impartially according to

each one's deeds, conduct yourselves with fear throughout the time of your exile, knowing that you were ransomed from the futile ways inherited from your forefathers, not with perishable things such as silver or gold, but with the precious blood of Christ, like that of a lamb without blemish or spot.” (1 Peter 1:13-19).

The significant motivating factor for all who love their Savior is the cross! That is what Peter is communicating. The believer’s salvation has been bought at an infinitely great price! The cost was nothing less than the precious blood of Jesus Christ! In the words of the late German Pastor Dietrich Bonhoeffer, “Salvation is free, but discipleship will cost you your life.” This is undoubtedly the meaning of the words of the Lord Jesus in the Gospel of Matthew. Speaking in parables, Jesus said, “The kingdom of heaven is like treasure hidden in a field, which a man found and covered up. Then, in his joy, he sells all he has and buys that field. Again, the kingdom of heaven is like a merchant searching for fine pearls, who, on finding one pearl of great value, sold all that he had and bought it.” (Matthew 13:44-46). The pearl of great value is salvation in Christ. The path that God has laid out for all Christians is sanctification. Discipleship is an integral part of the Christian sanctification process. As believers grow in the fear of the Lord, they increasingly desire to “pick up their cross” and follow wherever God may lead them!

This paper attempts to provide a biblical understanding of the fear of God, give examples of its reasonableness given God’s character, and ultimately encourage Christians to cultivate and pursue this quality as part of their ongoing sanctification. There was a time in Western civilization when the phrase ‘the fear of the Lord’ was understood and held significance for many people. Sadly, that day is long gone! Yet, the church of Jesus Christ is never without hope! The prophet Habakkuk lived in troubling and confusing times. Due to their grievous sins, God was about to bring judgment and decimation upon His covenant people. The prophet knew that a great awakening was desperately needed. He understood that a revival of God’s people was necessary. So, Habakkuk prayed, “O LORD, I have heard the report of you, and your work, O LORD, do I fear. In the midst of the years make it known; in wrath remember mercy.” (Hab. 3:2). May the prayer of Habakkuk be the prayer of the Christian Church in the twenty-first century! Along with the hymn writer, let us sing and pray:

Revive your work, oh Lord  
Give Pentecostal showers  
Be yours the glory, yours alone  
The blessing Lord be ours. Amen